40 Days of Lenten Prayers

A sacred journey through prayer, scripture, and spiritual reflection

Preparing our hearts for Easter through daily prayer and meditation

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Introduction to Lent

Lent is a sacred season of **repentance, prayer, and renewal**. For 40 days, Christians around the world seek to grow closer to God, purify their hearts, and prepare for the joy of Easter.

> The number 40 appears throughout Scripture as a time of testing and preparation:
>
> - The rain fell for **40 days** and 40 nights during the Flood
> - Moses spent **40 days** on Mount Sinai receiving God's law
> - The Israelites wandered **40 years** in the wilderness
> - Jesus fasted and prayed for **40 days** in the desert

During these 40 days, we are called to examine ourselves, repent of our sins, and renew our commitment to Christ through prayer, fasting, and works of mercy.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." — Psalm 51:10

How to Use This Booklet

Begin each day of your Lenten journey with prayer and reflection. This booklet provides a structured approach to deepen your spiritual practice over the full **40 days**.

Daily Prayer Practice:

1. Find a **quiet place** where you can be alone with God
2. Begin with the **sign of the cross** and a moment of silence
3. Read the **scripture** passage for the day
4. Reflect on the daily **theme** and how it relates to your life
5. Recite the **daily prayer**, letting the words resonate in your heart
6. Conclude with a personal prayer of **commitment** for the day

Consider adding **weekly practices** such as reading St. Ephraim's prayer on Fridays, or incorporating morning prayers from the Orthodox tradition to enrich your Lenten devotions.

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." — James 4:8

The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

This powerful prayer is recited throughout Great Lent, especially on weekdays. It expresses the essence of spiritual struggle during the Lenten journey, focusing on personal transformation and inner change.

> *O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not.*
>
> *(Prostration)*
>
> *But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant.*
>
> *(Prostration)*
>
> *Yea, O Lord King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.*
>
> *(Prostration)*

St. Ephraim (306-373 AD) was a Syrian deacon and prolific hymnographer known as the "Harp of the Holy Spirit." This prayer has become central to Orthodox Lenten practice, focusing on spiritual virtues and personal repentance.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." — Psalm 51:10

Morning Prayer for Lent

Begin each morning of your Lenten journey with this traditional Orthodox prayer, setting your heart and mind on spiritual renewal.

> *O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth,*
> *Who art everywhere present and fillest all things,*
> *Treasury of good things and Giver of life:*
> *Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity,*
> *and save our souls, O Good One.*
>
> — *Orthodox Morning Prayer*

This prayer invites the Holy Spirit to purify and renew us. Consider reciting it each morning before your daily Lenten prayer, preparing your heart to receive God's grace.

Before beginning your prayer:

- Find a quiet place free from distractions
- Light a candle if possible, symbolizing Christ's light
- Cross yourself and stand reverently in God's presence
- Take a moment to calm your thoughts and breathing

Day 1 — For self-improvement

Scripture: Luke 6:42

> Dear God, help me to focus and fix my flaws rather than judging others.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" - Luke 6:42

Day 2 — To carry my cross

Scripture: Matthew 16:24

> Dear God, I do not pray for deliverance from burdens, but for the strength and patience to bear them.

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'" - Matthew 16:24

Day 3 — To help carry another person's cross

Scripture: Mark 15:21

> Dear God, let me be like Simon who helped Jesus carry his cross. When I see someone struggle with a burden may I be the one who helps lift it.

†

"A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross." - Mark 15:21

Day 4 — To cultivate silence

Scripture: 1 Kings 19:12

> Dear God, let me discipline myself to make time for silent meditation. Help me to be still and thereby come to know deeper thoughts.

"And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper." - 1 Kings 19:12

Day 5 — To do the will of God

Scripture: Luke 22:42

> Dear God, my sincere prayer today is "thy will be done."

†

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." - Luke 22:42

Day 6 — For deeper joy

Scripture: Psalm 118:24

> Dear God, let me find joy & happiness daily, even in the most unpromising of circumstances.

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." - Psalm 118:24

Day 7 — To be a peacemaker

Scripture: Matthew 5:9

> Dear God, Jesus said 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' Strengthen my resolve to be a peacemaker and to encourage others to do the same.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." - Matthew 5:9

Day 8 To eat vegetarian

Scripture: Daniel 1:11

> Dear God, through this season of Lent, empower me to be like the prophet Daniel who practiced vegetarianism.

"Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink." - Daniel 1:11-12

Day 9 — For a simpler life

Scripture: Matthew 19:24

> Dear God, I resolve to clean out my home, giving away what is unused, unneeded and unnecessary so that I may be unfettered from material things.

†

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." - Matthew 19:24

Day 10 — To serve others

Scripture: Matthew 23:11

> Dear God, I want to be your hands and feet in serving & helping others.

"The greatest among you will be your servant." - Matthew 23:11

Day 11 — To reduce arrogance

Scripture: Proverbs 16:18

> Dear God, let me clearly see and overcome arrogance and pride when they appear in my person.

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." - Proverbs 16:18

Day 12 — For a deeper desire of God

Scripture: Psalm 119:18

> Dear God, increase within me the very desire to know you more clearly and more deeply.

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." - Psalm 119:18

Day 13 — To be kinder

Scripture: 2 Kings 25:28

> Dear God, enlarge and expand kindness within me so that I am kinder than is necessary.

"And he spoke kindly to him, and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon." - 2 Kings 25:28

Day 14 — For a humble spirit

Scripture: Matthew 6:3

> Dear God, no matter how many virtues I may have, let me retain a spirit of humility and modesty.

†

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." - Matthew 6:3

Day 15 — To drop judgement

Scripture: Matthew 7:1

> Dear God, let me put an end to being judgmental.

†

"Judge not, that you be not judged." - Matthew 7:1

Day 16 — To forgive

Scripture: Acts 7:60

> Dear God, help me become a great forgiver so that I am not waiting in ambush for revenge.

"Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'" - Acts 7:60

Day 17 — For self-forgiveness

Scripture: Isaiah 43:25

> Dear God, I do not wish to live with the burden of guilt. Help me to accept your forgiveness, let go of the past and embrace the future.

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." - Isaiah 43:25

Day 18 — To bless an enemy

Scripture: Romans 12:20

> Dear God, rather than retaliate against an enemy, help me find ways to bless and possibly transform an enemy into a friend.

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink." - Romans 12:20

Day 19 — To overcome

Scripture: 1 John 4:4

> Dear God, let me triumph over every tragedy.

†

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." - 1 John 4:4

Day 20 — To care for our world

Scripture: Psalm 89:11

> Dear God, help me to care for your creation and to seek to correct whatever threatens harm to it.

"The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it." - Psalm 89:11

Day 21 — To be like an angel

Scripture: Hebrews 1:14

> Dear God, let me be an angel of mercy, ministering to those who are struggling.

†

"Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" - Hebrews 1:14

Day 22 — For right speech

Scripture: Proverbs 16:24

> Dear God, may my words inspire, not injure; heal not hurt.

†

"Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." - Proverbs 16:24

Day 23 — For hope

Scripture: Zephaniah 3:17

> Dear God, may I always hope for the best, believe in the best and work for the best in all circumstances.

†

"The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." - Zephaniah 3:17

Day 24 — To learn from pain

Scripture: Genesis 50:20

> Dear God, I don't want my pain to be wasted. Let me learn from it and unite it to Christ's pain.

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." - Genesis 50:20

Day 25 — To believe that God is good

Scripture: Numbers 14:18

> Dear God, open my eyes to see your unconditional love for me.

†

"The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion." - Numbers 14:18

Day 26 To affirm faith in myself

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17

> Dear God, help me believe that, with your help, I have the inner strength to change.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Day 27 — To count blessings

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

> Dear God, let me count my blessings, not my burdens.

†

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Day 28 — To be an encourager

Scripture: Hebrews 10:24

> Dear God, I know that more people give up and give in due to lack of encouragement, so let me be an encourager.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." - Hebrews 10:24

Day 29 — To be far more loving

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:8

> Dear God, help me to love everyone and show that all are included in your love.

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." - 1 Peter 4:8

Day 30 — For patience in suffering

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5

> Dear God, let me bear troubles & traumas with patience & with trust in you.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." - Proverbs 3:5

Day 31 — To resist temptation

Scripture: James 1:14

> Dear God, grant me the grace to resist the worldly temptations of materialism, commercialism, and greed.

"But each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed." - James 1:14

Day 32 — For perseverance in good works

Scripture: Galatians 6:9

> Dear God, protect me from discouragement as I serve others in your name.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." - Galatians 6:9

Day 33 — To be a mirror

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

> Dear God, may I reflect back to people their own essential desire to love, to care and to be kind.

†

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Day 34 — For an open heart

Scripture: Ephesians 1:18

> Dear God, let me have an open, receptive heart.

†

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you." - Ephesians 1:18

Day 35 — To put love into action

Scripture: John 13:34

> Dear God, let me put love into action moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." - John 13:34

Day 36 To bring light

Scripture: Matthew 5:14

> Dear God, allow me to be a beacon of light for all who are discouraged and despairing, weary and worn out so that they will not curse the darkness.

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden." - Matthew 5:14

Day 37 — For more careful study of the Gospel

Scripture: Psalm 119:47

> Dear God, create in me a desire to set aside time to study and reflect on Scripture, especially the Gospels.

"I delight in your commands because I love them." - Psalm 119:47

Day 38 — To overlook faults

Scripture: Luke 6:37

> Dear God, let me be ignorant of the faults of others.

†

"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned." - Luke 6:37

Day 39 — For greater inner peace

Scripture: Philippians 4:7

> Dear God, help me cultivate your peace which surpasses all understanding.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." - Phil 4:7

Day 40 — To continue advancing spiritually

Scripture: Luke 2:52

> Dear God, may my Lenten practices help to make great advances in my spiritual life, and may those continue throughout the year.

†

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." - Luke 2:52

Closing Reflection: Preparing for Easter

As our Lenten journey draws to a close, we prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter. These 40 days have been a time of spiritual renewal, repentance, and growing closer to God.

As you prepare for Easter, reflect on:

- How has your **prayer life** deepened during these 40 days?
- What spiritual **insights** have you gained that you will carry forward?
- How might you continue the disciplines of **prayer and reflection** beyond Lent?
- In what ways has God's **transforming grace** been evident in your life?

Carry forward the spiritual growth of these 40 days. Let the transformation begun in Lent bear lasting fruit in love, mercy, and faith throughout the Easter season and beyond.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"
— 2 Corinthians 5:17